

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 PRS-01 NSC-07 NSCE-00 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SSO-00 INRE-00 USIE-00 PA-04

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DRAFTED BY ARA:WGBOWDLER:MBB

APPROVED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY

S/PRS:MISS POULAIN

ARA/CCA:ELITTLE

ARA/APU:FORTIZ

S/S:SRGAMMON

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES IMMEDIATE

INFO USINT DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

USDEL ALEXANDRIA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 092171

LIMDIS, TOSEC 227

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AR, CU, PFOR, SCUL

SUBJECT: CRONKITE - CASTRO INTERVIEW

REF: BUENOS AIRES 2989

1. LAST FRIDAY (APRIL 26) AMBASSADOR ORFILA MADE THE SAME INFORMAL AND CONFIDENTIAL APPROACH TO DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY BOWDLER THAT NORTH AMERICAN DESK OFFICIAL MADE TO EMBASSY. THE ONLY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FURNISHED BY ORFILA WAS THAT HE IS ARRANGING A CRONKITE - PERON INTERVIEW (AGREED IN PRINCIPLE BUT NO DATE SET) AND IN THE COURSE OF THESE DISCUSSIONS CRONKITE RAISED POSSIBILITY OF GOA ASSISTANCE IN ARRANGING INTERVIEW WITH CASTRO.

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2. WHETHER INITIATIVE FOR CASTRO INTERVIEW ORIGINATED WITH CRONKITE OR WAS INSPIRED BY ORFILA WE DO NOT KNOW. CRONKITE HAS NOT APPROACHED THE DEPARTMENT. WE SUSPECT THAT THE ARGENTINES ARE INTERESTED IN PROMOTING THE INTERVIEW AS PART OF THEIR LEADERSHIP DRIVE TO REINCORPORATE THE CASTRO REGIME INTO INTER-AMERICAN FOLD, BUT NOT AT THE RISK OF PREJUDICING THEIR RELATIONS WITH US. GIVEN THE UNPREDICTABILITY OF CASTRO THEY ARE NOT SURE WHAT THE CUBAN LEADER MIGHT SAY IN THE INTERVIEW AND HENCE ARE PROBABLY TRYING TO OBTAIN OUR PRIOR CONCURRENCE.

3. WE SEE NO NEED TO TAKE A POSITION FOR OR AGAINST THE ARGENTINE SOUNDING ON ARRANGING THE INTERVIEW. THAT IS MATTER FOR THE GOA TO DECIDE. UNDER OUR CUBAN TRAVEL POLICY BONA FIDE US NEWSMEN CAN OBTAIN VALIDATION OF THEIR PASSPORTS FOR TRAVEL TO CUBA. IN OTHER WORDS, CRONKITE CAN REQUEST AUTHORIZATION TO TRAVEL TO CUBA ANY TIME HE DESIRES AND HIS PASSPORT WILL BE VALIDATED. OBTENTION OF VISA AND NEWS GATHERING ARRANGEMENTS IN CUBA ARE MATTERS WHICH HE WILL HAVE TO WORK OUT WITH GOC.

4. IN ANSWERING THE FOREIGN OFFICE INQUIRY THE EMBASSY SHOULD LIMIT ITSELF TO STATING OUR CUBAN TRAVEL POLICY AS DESCRIBED ABOVE. YOU SHOULD AVOID GIVING ANY IMPRESSION THAT WE FAVOR OR OPPOSE ARGENTINE ASSISTANCE TO CRONKITE, LEAVING THAT ISSUE TO BE DECIDED BY THE GOA. RUSH

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